776 Therefore nobody dares to appropriate the ob-
782 jects that have been thrown away or even to touch
783 them. Only into the house of the S'iem and into the whole royal family can no entrance be found by the thlen, and therefore some valuable things may be given to the Khasi king. This may be connected with the fact that usually on the next morning after the above ceremony nothing more is to be found of the objects that were given away. Therefore it rarely happened in former times that anyone kept a found object from fear that it might be thlen property and he might bring the thlen devil into his house with it. But if they did take an object they found, a piece of money or such, home with them, the oracle was first asked by egg throwing whether it contained any evil, and only when this was denied and the real owner could not be found did they keep a part of it; the rest had to be used for sacrificial purposes.

The immovable property is treated the same way as the movable property. Fields which the family formerly possessed lie fallow; nobody dares to take them over or to plant anything on them.
• [477] But the whole village hastens to help the former thlen owners who have lost all their property. They are given clothes and rice and helped in building a hut so that they can begin an honest life again.

c) Story of a Former Thlen Worshipper.

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593 How is all this known about the thlen, many ask, if the owners try to hide their secret? An indirect answer is already given by the whole previous presentation. Then it also happens, for example, that men marry into the house of a woman who is a thlen owner. Certainly this is not always known beforehand, although real thlen

1 [devil snake; see Cat 116, pp 28 ff. --Ano 1951]

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cover what their ancestors are doing for them, and what their views and inclinations may be as regards the amount of aid they may give. To a Khasia there is no difficulty about the matter; when in distress or requiring aid of any kind, seeking omens by the breaking of eggs (which I will hereafter describe) he appeals to and propitiates any one ancestor he may select; only one or two may promise such protection, and these it may so happen have died years ago. The benefit also conferred may be very trivial, and sufficiently acknowledged by the setting up of stones of small size; on the contrary, if great favours are conferred on the wealthy we find large monoliths forming conspicuous landmarks on many a hill-top, scattered over a large area of country, and which are mostly known to the country round by the name of the individuals who have wrought so much good in their after state.

These stones are never erected in pairs or in even numbers; in counting over a very large series still perfect, I found them invariably in sets of three, five, seven, or, as I have before mentioned in the case of the Nongtariang clan, in two sets, five and five, on opposite sites, to the same individual.* Even numbers are considered unfinished or imperfect.

A reference to the plans given, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, will show the various arrangements in which the stones are set up, both in a segment of a circle and at right angles to each other, as in fig. 3. The most common form, however, is in line, fig. 4. Fig. 1 consisted of a circular platform raised about two feet, faced with rough stones on the front face. These three examples were observed on the hill of Lailang-kote, where the bazar is held, and I have not seen anywhere else the monoliths so arranged; in other parts of the country they are invariably set up in a straight row.

These monuments are also erected for such a reason as the following:—During the illness of a person, every kind of propitiation and exorcism either by the breaking of eggs, sacrifice of fowls, pigs, etc., and by the examination of the liver and viscera, having been made, and then failing to restore him; the sick man may vow that should he recover, he will erect a set of stones to one of his ancestors, who, it is presumed, on knowing of the intention, will do his best to save him.

In setting up these slabs all members of the community are under an obligation to assist on such an occasion, and are not paid for their labour, beyond receiving in the evening a little food or liquor at the dwelling of the family who have sought the aid. The skilled workmen employed on the stone-cutting are,

* Three and five are the most frequent numbers met with, nine very rare I have seen eleven.

[See end charts 1–4, category 116 -- Analyst]

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

476 764 211 [533] however, regularly paid, as is done when cutting the stones for the funeral platform; while this work is in progress musicians are also entertained, and a continual beating of tom-toms (hand-drums) is kept up while the work is in progress.

764 211 171 That many of these monuments, and by far the larger number, are of great age may be inferred from the fact that their history is quite lost.

As to their distribution, they are to be found over all the higher part of the range; the finest, certainly, in the central portion and in the vicinity of the larger villages, such as Cherra Poonjee, Juwai, Nurtiang, etc.

In Nongstoin, on the west, they gradually die out, and a few, not exceeding three or four feet in height, are to be found in the Khasia village towards the Garo tribes, but at this limit the Langams come in, and their customs assimilate more with the former-named people. It is the same on the east and north-east of Jaintia; the stones set up are smaller and of rougher form, and by no means so numerous, yet they are to be seen in all kinds of out-of-the-way places quite overgrown with grass and jungle, where villages have not existed for years. Indications were not wanting, shewing that the country had been formerly much more populous, especially on the northern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. I have, on the other hand, never come across structures of the kind anywhere beyond the limits of Khasi-speaking people, that is, between longitude 91 deg. and 92 deg. 30 min., which includes the Jaintia Hills, the people of which part are called "Sintengs", differing in some minor points from the Khasis; the dialect is distinct, and there is so strong a type-form of likeness and expression, the two can be generally separated without inquiry. The same remarks hold good for the western side; a Khasi of the border Nongstoin villages can be told off at a glance: so strong are the great clan likenesses.

I have traversed the whole country on the east: viz., the North Cachar Hills, inhabited by tribes of Kookis and Nāgas, and had the Khasi ever occupied permanently a larger area either on the east or west, particularly the former, emigrating, as they are supposed to have done, from that side, I think we might have expected to find, occasionally, remains of their imperishable monuments. The only exception that I know of occurs on the road from Nenglo to Hangrūng, in the North Cachar Hills district, beyond Asālua part of the country now in the occupation of Nagas, and formerly entirely in that of Kacharis, who are Bodos or Méchis. The road lies through forest, keeping along the high spur; at about two miles from the peak of Hemeo are to be seen several large slabs of stone nearly level with the ground, one ten feet by six, covering some sort of receptacle, for the ends of the